



South Carolina Department of Agriculture

Hugh E. Weathers, Commissioner

Media Contact: Meredith Atkinson, 803-734-2196, matkinson@scda.sc.gov

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Specialty Crop Block Grant Applications Being Accepted

COLUMBIA, S.C. – South Carolina’s Commissioner of Agriculture, Hugh E. Weathers, invites institutions and groups that support specialty crops within our state to submit applications for the Specialty Crop Block Grant Program (SCBGP). Those interested in participating in the program are encouraged to visit the South Carolina Department of Agriculture (SCDA) website, agriculture.sc.gov, to obtain the grant information and application.

The Specialty Crop Block Grant Program – Farm Bill (SCBGP-FB) is administered by the USDA’s Agricultural Marketing Service. The program is committed to help strengthen the market for specialty crops. Specialty crops are defined as fruits, vegetables, tree nuts, dried fruits, horticulture, and nursery crops, including floriculture. Deadline for proposals is 5 p.m. on May 15, 2015.

SCDA encourages organizations to develop projects that enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops, sustain the livelihood of farmers, and strengthen local economies by:

- Increasing nutritional knowledge and specialty crop consumption
- Improving efficiencies within distribution systems
- Promoting the development of good agricultural, handling and manufacturing practices while encouraging audit cost-sharing for small farmers, packers and processors
- Supporting research through standard and green initiatives
- Enhancing food safety
- Developing new/improved seed varieties and specialty crops
- Controlling pests and diseases
- Creating organic and sustainable production practices
- Establishing local and regional fresh food systems
- Expanding food access in underserved/food desert communities

Projects can be up to three years in duration. The project must fall within the criteria as described in the application and must benefit groups of producers, not individuals. Funds cannot be used for capital expenditures such as buildings, equipment, or land.

The Specialty Crop Block Grant Program is authorized under Section 101 of the Specialty Crops Competitiveness Act of 2004 (7 U.S.C. 1621 note.) and amended under Section 10109 of the Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008, Public Law 110-246 (the Farm Bill). SCBGP-FB is currently implemented under 7 CFR Part 1291 (published March 27, 2009; 74 FR 13313).

All questions and proposals should be directed to:

Amy London, SCDA Grant Administrator
South Carolina Department of Agriculture
PO Box 11280 Columbia, SC 29211
803-734-2210 Phone 803-734-2192 Fax
alondon@scda.sc.gov

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